

EQUALIZING X DISTORT

Volume 15, Issue 01

January 2015



Photo by Sergio Amalfitano

The School Jerks and I had arranged to do an interview for MRR around the time of the release of their full length. They were also working with someone else, but I tried to capture the band's history in one interview. I worked at transcribing the interview so that they could compare between the two and choose one to go with. I never heard back. And MRR never ran an interview on them. I would later learn that the band was being pulled in many directions and has gone on indefinite hiatus. The School Jerks are a breathe of fresh air. They are fiercely independent. They bring a lot of ideas to the scene. They aren't afraid to tell some unspoken truths about this city. And they really work hard at building a scene outside of the club gestapo. So here is an unofficial look at the School Jerks.

Introduce yourselves and tell us what you do in SCHOOL JERKS?

Ivan (I): I'm Ivan and I play drums.

Luke (L): I'm Luke and Ivan does a lot. He does all our tours and everything.

So he is also on booking.

L: I do fuck all other than writing songs which is important, but everything else I do fuck all.

You are the face of the band.

L: But that is not that important.

There is so much work that I don't do.

You are the lasting impression. That's a lot of work.

L: It means

absolutely nothing when everybody else does so much work.

Ben (B): I'm Ben and I play guitar.

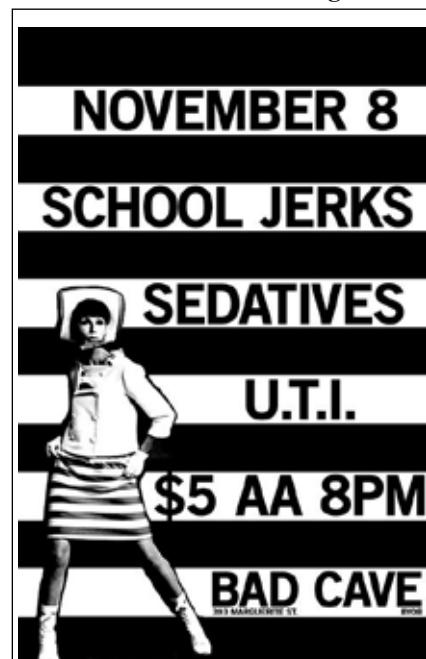
And I guess with Luke's idea of other things you also do all the recording.

B: Yeah, I do that side of things.

You help with the artwork. I saw a picture of you being exhausted by hand stamping some of the covers.

B: Yeah, so I do kind of production work of whatever stuff. I don't actually do the artwork. And also Matt plays bass. He is not here.

I was going to say that there is one missing SCHOOL JERK. Why is Matt



not here?

B: Matt lives in Rochester.

So how does this work? It seems like a pretty big obstacle. Rochester is not next door.

L: We used to have a ferry that went there.
B: That would be nice. He just comes up for shows. It works out well for tours because we go down there and meet up with him.

L: He has nothing going on with his life other than drinking beer and having a bone through his nose occasionally.

B: He is pretty good about being flexible and dropping things to come up here when we need him to.

Would that be shows and recording mostly?

B: Yeah.

What about practising? How do you guys practise?

B: Me and Ivan practise without Luke or Matt and then if we have a show or a tour he will come up a few days before and we will practise a bunch right before the show.

How does that work out for writing songs?

L: We used to practise with me, but then I lost my voice and I stopped screaming unless we are playing a show. It's a pain in the ass to lose your voice especially because in this band we don't have things that are that structured. It is mainly ranting. It is not as important that we practise together. You put all that together and it seems wise for us.

How long have the SCHOOL JERKS been around for? The oldest artifact I could find on the band was a flyer from November 8th, 2007. It is a show that you headlined so I imagine you would have been around before that.

L: Was it the AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER show?

B: What is that show? I am not sure we were around back then?

You played at Siesta Nouveaux with U.T.I. and the Sedatives, but you guys



were at the top of the flyer. It was with a bunch of bands starting out at the time.

B: I remember that show. That was an early one. The first show was June 16th, 2008.

L: Was that AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER?

B: Yeah. It was the summer 2008.

In an old EXD interview you said Mid-June of 2008 so that makes sense. So how did the band form?

L: It has everything to do with TERMINAL STATE.

A little bit. There is a core of the band from TERMINAL STATE.

B: We try not to think about that too much. Me and Ivan had just been in that band.

But you were the singer in that band and you switched to guitar.

B: Yeah. After that band fell apart we kept practising but without the other guys.

And how did Matt

and Luke come to join the band?

L: Are we talking about the first Matt because there is two Matts. Matt Hitch, who is now in the VALLEY BOYS.... we have been through three bass players. Matt Hitch was the first Matt.

Is it a pre-requisite to be a Matt.

EQUALIZING DISTORT

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 01

EQUALIZING-X-DISTORT MONTHLY is an extension of the weekly radio show heard on CIUT 89.5 FM every Sunday nights from 10:00pm 'til midnight (Participants: Rob Ferraz, D'Arcy Rix-Hayes, and Steph Perry).

The show dedicates itself to the underground hardcore punk scene. There is a particular emphasis on international releases in the developing straight edge, crust, Killed By Death, power violence, oi, and peace punk which means we play bands like Ruz, Contorture, Pleemobielz, Agoraphobic Nosebleed, the Warriors, and Korrupt.

There is a weekly demo feature (paying homage to the cassette format), weekly event listings, and a monthly top 10 retrospective look at new releases.

Equalizing-X-Distort

CIUT 89.5 FM

Sundays 10:00 pm - midnight

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CIUT 89.5 FM - "Equalizing Distort"

Top 10 Hardcore Releases
for December 2014

Band	Title	Format	Label
1. LOW THREAT PROFILE	"Product #3"	ep	Deep Six / Draw Blanks
2. GILLOOLY	Demo	cassette	More Power Tapes
3. GOVERNMENT FLU	"Tension"	LP	Refuse
4. DAMAGED HEAD	"Tunnel Vision"	LP	Adult Crash
5. CIRCLE FLEX	"The city spreads under your legs"	CD	Weekend Stand
6. AJAX	"Bleach for Breakfast"	ep	Even Worse
7. DIE	"Vexed"	ep	Sonic Terror Discs
8. THE COMBAT ZONE	s/t	LP	Side Two
9. KOWARD	"Desperate"	ep	Side Two
10. PISS	Demo	cassette	Self-Released

Equalizing Distort can be heard every Sunday night on CIUT 89.5 FM at 10:00 pm. The top 10 countdown can be heard in its entirety, complete with previews of the picks and analysis on the previous month in hardcore, on the last Sunday of the month.

I: There was an Eric I believe.

B: Parents in the early 80's all named their kids Matthew.

Maybe they are bible readers.

B: Actually that was a trend. Old testament names too. Like I am Benjamin. There is Nathaniel. Luke, John. Bible names for sure.

L: I remember there was this one time I was in church and my friend Nikolai, it was so easy to make him cry. We did because his name wasn't in the bible.

Let me ask you where the name SCHOOL JERKS comes from.

B: It is a song by this band called the VAINS. They are on Killed by Death #9 or 10. It is probably how most people have heard that.

Were you fans of the VAINS or was it just a neat name?

B: We were all fans of that band but basically we didn't have a band name and we were sitting around at Matt's apartment and someone was holding that record and it was on the back of that record and we picked it really without thinking too much.

It just struck you.

B: We are not a VAINS cover band. It is not very related to

L: We are going to play that song eventually.

B: We are. We all really do like that song.

It would make sense if you do cover the song.

B: It would be like our theme song.

Let me ask you about your artwork because it seems very distinct and consistent throughout your releases and I think that is because you have one person who does the artwork. Can

The description for the artwork for the "Decline" ep is best described by the artist herself taken from her blog at <http://tarabursey.blogspot.ca/2009/11/school-jerks-ep-cover.html>.

This drawing is based on a loose arrangement of 5 ripped fragments of photographs. The elements are (from the top left) two of the girls from the Manson family, two British bikers from the 60s, a hippie draped in an American flag, and one of the victims of the Kent State shooting in 1970. The rough concept is the "decline of the 60s counterculture."

Ben said that certain aspects of the drawing sort of remind him of the cover of the Beatles' Revolver, which is a pretty huge compliment. All in all, I'm really happy with how it turned out...it's different from the last few pieces of record or poster art I've done, but in a good way.

"A photograph of Mary Vecchio, a fourteen year old runaway, screaming over the body of Jeffery Miller appeared on the front pages of newspapers and magazines throughout the country, and the photographer, John Filo, was to win a Pulitzer Prize for the picture. The photo has taken on a life and importance of its own. This analysis looks at the photo, the photographer, and the impact of the photo.

"The Mary Vecchio picture shows



her on one knee screaming over Jeffrey Miller's body. Mary told one of us that she was calling for help because she felt she could do nothing (Personal Interview, 4/4/94). Miller is lying on the tarmac of the Prentice Hall parking lot. One student is standing near the Miller body closer than Vecchio. Four students are seen in the immediate background.

"John Filo, a Kent State photography major in 1970, continues to work as a professional newspaper photographer and editor. He was near the Prentice Hall parking lot when the Guard fired. He saw bullets hitting the ground, but he did not take cover because he thought the bullets were blanks. Of course, blanks cannot hit the ground."

(Source: <http://dept.kent.edu/sociology/lewis/lewhen.htm>)

Original photo of Kent state shooting by photographer John Filo.

you tell us about the artist?

B: Tara does the artwork. Tara Bursey. And who is she?

B: She's my lady. My life partner. She has done the artwork ever since the demo through all of the releases.

Can you describe her artwork? I think

Demo 2008 - This is the band's first recording from 2007. The demo came out in 2008 and was recorded and mixed by the guitarist, Ben. The songs on here include:

1. Rock 'n' Roll, Pt. III
2. Guestlist
3. Make it Blank

it is very unique in some ways. I love the detail and the cross hatching that brings out that. It takes a lot of work to draw characters like this. On the first record you have the kid drawing the swastika on the desk. Inside it is the same picture but with the kid

4. High School
5. Problems

Tara's artwork is on the cover and the person flipping the bird has a resemblance to Ben or Luke in the band. Three of these songs would appear on the "Toronto's Burning" comp put out by Schizophrenic.



looking up.

B: Yeah, he got caught.

It reminds me of those flip cartoons where the scene reveals as the pages turn. On the second record there is a description about the decline of the 60's. The drawing is based on loose arrangements of five fragments of photographs. The Manson family, two British bikers, someone from Kent State, and the rough concept is the decline of the 60's counter culture.

L: That was the lyrics to the song so that is why she did that. What I wanted to do for the song was when old people tell you about the 60's they are telling you moments about when it was crazy like "James Dean was there" and "Everybody was doing this and that". "I was high, it was wild." I had a lot of help from my friend Nathaniel, who is in that band HYGIENE. We tried to jam pack so many instances that were big deals in the 60's. It is all in one. It is just shouting out what was going on in the 60's. Yeah the 60's was really cool and we seem to idolize the period but ultimately it was shitty and nothing really came of it. There was a lot of strife and terribleness. **Well that was the fire behind punk wasn't it?**

L: You could say that but let's put punk aside and consider that there was so many pains in the ass. Now we have new age people. There is so much bad lingering from the 60's. They all turned into businessmen too. That was really smart to do that.

B: That's a whole big topic but the world we live in now is a shitty fallout of these



people growing up and being terrible.

L: You can be in an office and like "Oh I got a bean bag chair. Let's get synergy here. We're chillin' making millions."

B: "Do I look like a businessman?"

L: "I'm not your grandfather. This is making money with class."

This is a great demonstration of how that second record has so much to it woven in together. I am wondering if that was done for any of the other releases. I haven't heard anything about the first cover and whether it combines with the lyrics or the third. So can I ask you about the first record? What is the theme for the cover of that ?

B: Tara comes up with a drawing about something that reflects the release. It is not always the same. It is not always

one song from each record. She will find something to grab on to and then be inspired by and represent with a drawing. It is not always that uniform. The demo was trying to represent the band generally and using the name SCHOOL JERKS and what does that bring out of the band generally.

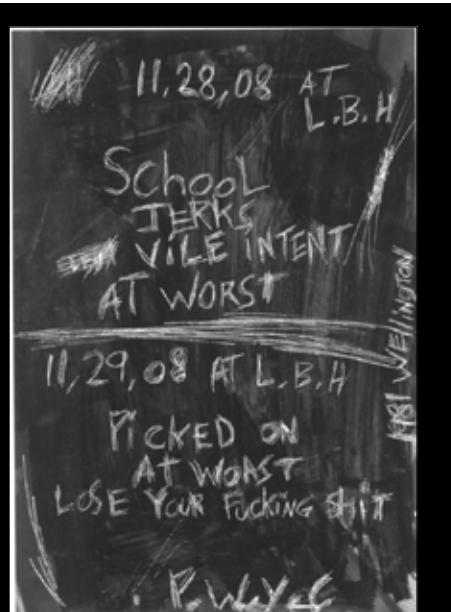
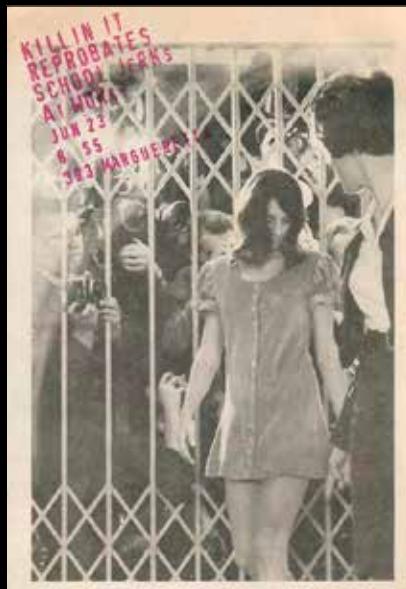
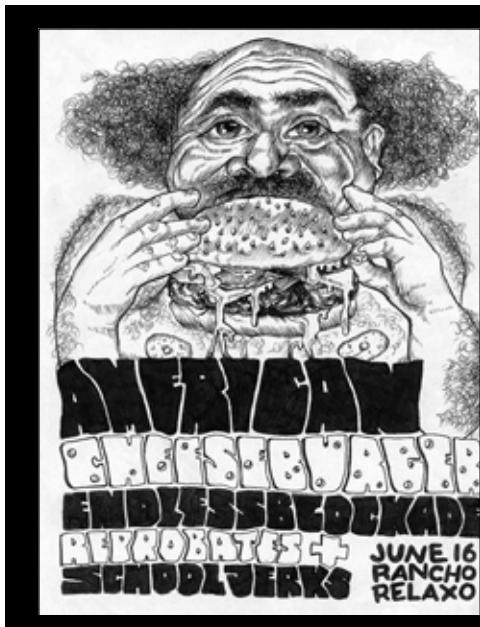
If I remember correctly there is the back of someone in a leather jacket flipping you off.

B: It is more general. That could even be punk as a whole. It gets a little more specific with the 7". That is also inspired by the name.

Right, because the kid is in school.

B: It is a bit of a statement about punk as a whole, but gets more specific as it gets into the other releases.

Can I ask you about the third release?



It has a hand reaching out with a shadow almost more sinister and it is reaching out to a set of rosary beads.

B: It was something I was thinking about a lot of the time. Of all the releases that is the least specific.

Do you know what it is in reference to? What was the idea behind it? I grew up doing a lot of religious things and now that I am an atheist it looks like grasping at the rosary beads as a sign of fear and it seems like that is how people reach for religion.

L: I was thinking more like it is out of reach.

B: I think you got it from that so it is doing its job. It is about how religion is one way it comes through to people.

It is about fear and control and the fact that it is something that is out of reach.

L: You didn't even have a Catholic background.

L: We all do it to

ourselves because we try and have

definitive answers. You didn't have it



Photo by Sergio Amalfitano

shoved down your throat. My Grandfather dragged me to Catholic church and I ran away screaming when I had to deal with the smoke sceptre thing.

The incense.

L: I knocked that and then ran out.

My grandfather kept making me go and cry,

but eventually he was like "If you are just going to cry and scream I am not

going to take you to church."

B: I didn't have it too bad because I am the youngest so my grandmother tried to secretly baptise my older sister with orange juice in the kitchen when my parents weren't there. By the time it got to me they had given up on a lot of things.

L: My parents did it because my grandfather thought it was the right thing to do.

You have a new LP out and while we are talking about artwork, I wonder if this is like the second ep. There

School Jerks "Nothing Else" ep, 2010

Here is a review from MRR of this ep.

Riff Raff only puts out the rawest of shit (the Shoot It Up/Analingus split or Mid-Atlantic scumrock a la Ladies or Dirty Fingers for example) and Toronto's School Jerks fit the bill.

Three spitting and shitty bleats of sub-KBD punk rock moderne. Half-cocked guitar playing with garbage tone, rudimentary rhythm section, obscenity-laden vocals leaving the mic coated in spittle. You can't argue with



the formula, even if it's been done to death. The least polite sounding Toronto band I've heard in some time.(RK)

The songs found on here are:
1. Screamer,
2. Control,

3. Ready to Die,
 4. Ugly Minds, Ugly Faces,
 5. Moral Addiction,
 6. 4-F
- (Cowabunga Records –
311 Steam Drive / Genoa,
IL / 60135 / USA / www.
cowabungarecords.com)

seems to be lots of disjointed images, but then if you know bits about the history of Toronto they sort of come together and I am wondering There is the military guy in lingerie. It was Ron Williams who committed all those sex crimes and I am looking at the crane and that is Toronto's skyline with all the condos going up. There is the Sun Newspaper with the "Rot in Hell" headline, which is what one hears from the right wing media all the time.

L: It's all taken from songs.

This looks like Toronto.

B: Yeah, so it is like the pink record in that way. It is from the lyrics.

Okay so they are taken from the lyrics then? So could you almost link an image up with each song?

B: It's not that exact.

L: It is kind of trying to do that.

B: Like Luke was explaining before we started recording there was a lot of crossover between the songs. Like some of the songs are about the same thing where there are three concepts in one song. We thought about doing a drawing for each song, but it isn't that specific. Each drawing on there is inspired by a line from one of the songs, but it is not divided up that way. If you look at the insert with the lyrics we put the lyrics in as one big block because they are not really separate ideas.

I got to say they are hard to figure out where one starts and where one stops.

B: That is the idea.

L: I wanted to make it complicated because I wanted to make it more of a "Diary of a madmen" kind of thing. It



Photo by Daniel Vella

is more unsettling, unhinged. The lyrics had more to do with being paranoid and insane. I wanted to make the lyrics look like that too. So it looks like you are dealing with someone who has tinfoil on their head and ranting on the street.

I found it difficult to follow.

L: Those people are difficult to follow, too.

I guess, mission accomplished. One thing I wanted to say is it just a coincidence that her artwork has a Pettibon-esque quality to it.

L: I think that is so stupid.

B: I take issue with that.

L: I think it is because the art is good, well it must be Raymond Pettibon inspired because if it is any good it is not just some retard that has stick figure on the cover.

But here are the similarities. You have characters and they are always in shitty scenarios.

L: It is fuckin' hardcore. We are not talking sunshine and lollipops.

I know. We are not talking "Peanuts". But it is those two qualities where you could see a character and it is reminding us of the shitty side of life.

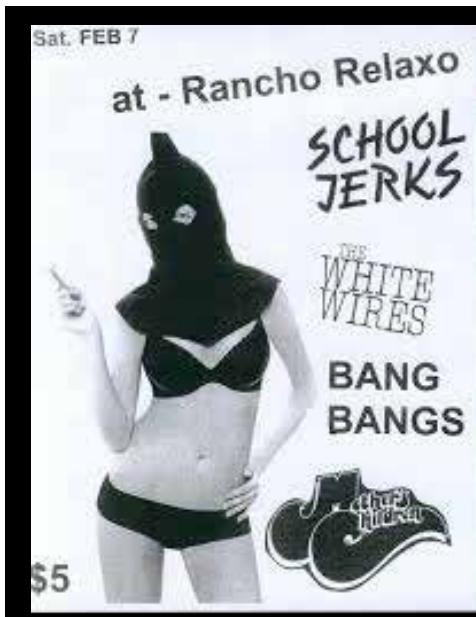
B: Because it's punk. Punk records all have....

L: It's all a downer.

If you look at her artwork there is more detail to it. In some ways I would say she has exceeded what Raymond Pettibon has done.

L: That is insane to talk about. Are we talking about how Raymond Pettibon is done. I know OFF! is bad, but ...

I am not trying to slag anybody here.



I am just saying that you guys are often described like BLACK FLAG. There is artwork that is similar to the BLACK FLAG style.

I: It is easy enough to see why people would say that.

And maybe that is why there is an overbearing amount of reviews that say you guys sound like BLACK FLAG.

L: People have also said in reviews is how can you not sound like BLACK FLAG if you are any good. They are like the hugest deal ever. Hearing that band is the game changer for everybody isn't it.

B: There is a review that I like that came out. I feel like I can't even



BAD VIBRATIONS

explain. It is hard to go into the BLACK FLAG thing, but there is this review that completely nailed it. Yeah it does sound like BLACK FLAG and it is funny when people say that in a nasty way. We are aware of that as

much as anyone else. It is really funny to me that there is a whole genre called D-Beat. Mike Stone, the guy who produced DISCHARGE and did Clay

Records, I saw him on myspace and it was really funny because he found out about D-Beat and he was like "What the fuck are you people doing?" He has a different perspective. He thinks if you want to get somewhere in the music business, when DISCHARGE came out we were original. What is this? But anyway it is taken for granted that bands sound like DISCHARGE. Why wouldn't you? They are an essential element of punk. Bands don't want to sound like BLACK FLAG because they don't want to take that on. If we do it is like we are not playing fair. We did something wrong to be that inspired by them.

L: It is not like we are sitting around listening to "Damaged" all the time. I barely even listen to BLACK FLAG anymore because I like them so much. I have to find something new. We sound like BLACK FLAG because we are

School Jerks

"P.P.D.S.C.E.M.F.O.B.B.T." EP aka "Decline" ep, 2009

The School Jerks are a hardcore punk band from Toronto, Ontario (Canada). They formed around 2008 or so. Their sound is simple, but effective and hard-hitting. Sort of a mix between early Black Flag and the later Germs. According to an interview, two members of the band, Ben and Luke, were previously in another band called "Terminal State"; the band broke up, but Ben and Luke wanted to keep playing music. The School Jerks' name is taken from the title of a song called "School Jerks" by a band called the Vains. The band has released a demo tape (released 2008), and two 7" records (the first of which I have already reviewed). This is the School Jerks' newest release, and it's a four-song 7" vinyl EP called "Decline".

1. Decline

Can't understand the lyrics, but the song is great, anyways. The vocals sound a lot like the slurred fucked-up-but-great yelling of Darby Crash, while the drumming and guitars punch hard like a song by Black Flag or the Circle Jerks! There's a little solo in the middle of the song. The song ends in a slowly fading clash of the final chords having been stroked.

2. Rentboy

Fastest song on the EP. Vocals sound great. I love the distortion. Yep, I have



no idea what they're saying on any of these songs... Side 1's over, so turn the damn record over toooooo!!

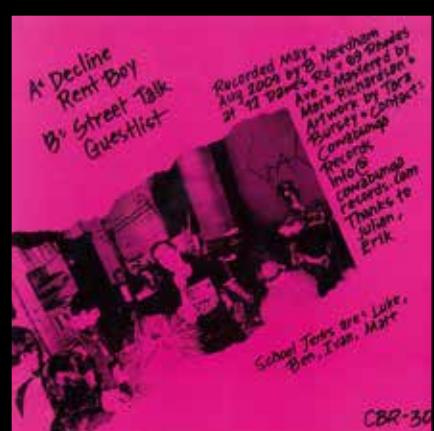
3. Street Talk

My favorite song on here. The beat sort of holds back in the verse section, with the occasional cymbal clashing here n' there. Awesome riff, especially when the chorus section kicks in... just sounds really good to me! I'll bet this one sounds fucking great played live... the chorus riff has such a cool roll to it... that's when the beat starts resemble the first song's more... it's all cool, though.

4. Guestlist

Starts with a neat, lead-n-bassdrum intro... quickly, the first verse of the song begins. This one has a pretty neat outro-section that comes after the second chorus.

It's short, but good. It definitely has the



vibe and attitude of the original hardcore punk bands; in a good way. The music's pretty straightforward simple, so if you're looking for jazz-fusion'er something, don't look for it in this EP. It definitely has a classic vibe to it -- this is definitely something I think I'll still be listening to in the future. And with the band just starting off, it makes you wonder what they're gonna do next -- the 4-1-1 is that they may be working on some new recordings in the near future (read: probably before Summer begins), and it should rock as hard as this one does already.

(Cowabunga Records – 311 Steam Drive / Genoa, IL / 60135 / USA / www.cowabungarecords.com)

Review from <http://thelegitman93.blogspot.ca/2010/04/review-92-school-jerks-decline-ep-2010.html>

awesome I guess.

B: I think that is true too. How much of it is us being influenced by studying BLACK FLAG and recreate it. People have that mentality that people couldn't really have these feelings themselves. People can't be into punk and wanting to address these things.

They must be just copying some style. We are not just sitting around studying records to re-create them. That's who we are.

I don't think you guys are a copy. I think you are borrowing from other sounds, in fact I don't even think you are borrowing from stuff. I think you are just writing it. It is just coming out of you guys. Let me ask you about this release which came out as a co-release. One of the labels is Bad Vibrations and I understand that you guys are involved in this. Tell me who is Bad Vibrations Records.

L: I put out a NAUGHTY GIRLS 7" and I first wanted to put out a BAD SKIN 7" especially getting a test pressing of it because that took forever. They are not a real band anymore.

No but they had all those recordings.

L: It has been nice because we took forever to put out the BAD SKIN record but the NAUGHTY GIRLS are amazing and they are functioning band that know what they are doing. BAD SKIN are just a bunch of retard mainly. They are great because now we are going to be able to



do it. And we are trying to get the label together even more than just putting out these three records.

B: We should give them a more bare bones thing. Luke put out the NAUGHTY GIRLS single. That was the beginning of *Bad Vibrations* but he

wasn't sure where it would go. He just had to put out that record. It doesn't even say *Bad Vibrations* on the record.

L: Because I didn't come up with the label name yet. That was the sad thing.

B: It just had to come out regardless. It was like once that one record came out the three of us decided to really do it and do a label.

So it is the combined group?

B: It is the band as a label. So the

SCHOOL

JERKS record
is a split with
Grave Mistake

and the next

release is going to be a BAD SKIN 7". We are getting the test pressing for that on Tuesday. The next record after that is going to be a split and that is going to be a KREMLIN record.

Amazing so some of your other bands will be released.

B: And that is another split with *Beach Impediment Records*.

They are a great label. They did that IMPALERS 7", the DESPERAT 7" and the FRONT LINE 7" and the

second HASSLER 7" in the pipeline. Where does the name *Bad Vibrations* come from?

L: Yet again it is that guy from HYGIENE. He is a big influence on the band. He is an old friend of ours and we didn't have an idea for the name because similar to SCHOOL JERKS we are just shitty with that stuff.

Good Vibrations is a song by the BEACH BOYS right? It seems like a great pisstake on the BEACH BOYS.

L: But the BEACH BOYS are great. That's different.

It is almost like a punk version of Good Vibrations. It is Bad Vibrations. It is also a way to describe punk songs. Bad Vibrations.

B: Bad vibes. No one talks about the bad vibes. They need to be talked about too. **This isn't the only other extra-curricular band project the band has been involved in. The band was on a**

bit of a hiatus. Do you think that is why you all got busy with

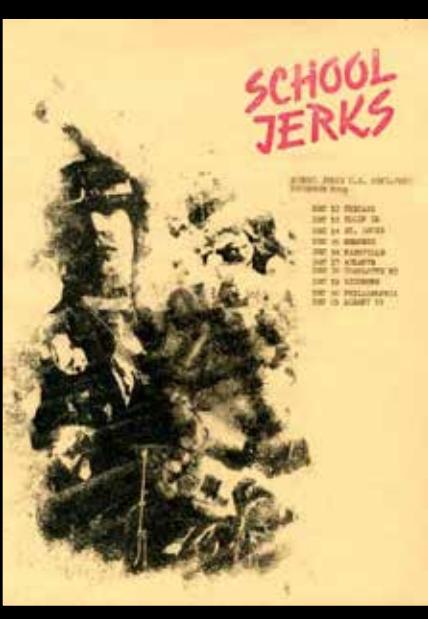
other projects?

L: We always have a break. We barely ever play shows.

B: We have been on hiatus on and off for the last five years.

L: We are always doing something but I guess no one really knows it.

B: That is a good point. Me and Ivan have talked about this. There is a lot that happens with bands between shows. We are always working, but we don't play all the time so people might not know. Like



we were working on the LP when we took that break.

So you weren't doing nothing.

B: I wasn't in Toronto but I was working on the LP. At the same time Ivan was doing a lot with KREMLIN.

And there was other things. Luke you were in a band called FLQs weren't you?

L: Ivan and I did a VILETONES cover band because we thought it would be fun. It is not a real band, we just wanted to do VILETONES covers.

Was it fun?

L: I don't know. I thought we were pretty good.

Will FLQ play out more?

L: We wanted to always play a Hallowe'en show. We had worked so hard on the band and seeing as we couldn't get a gig on Hallowe'en. Nobody wanted us to play.

I: We asked so many people.

B: That's why you originally did it.

L: It was all about just doing a Hallowe'en thing especially because Matt Hitch is in the band. In the States people are way more into doing covers on Hallowe'en. We always thought that would be awesome for the VILETONES. **There was a Hallowe'en show that did covers.**

L: It is coming up more. There was a time in Toronto where it wasn't as big of a deal as it is now.

This year they did it. It was one of the first that I noticed.

L: Yeah. Matt Hitch saying Indiana where he is from you had to do it. Somebody would be the GERMS,



Show at bridge under trouble waters by Daniel Vella

somebody would be this, somebody would be that.

It's a great idea. Hallowe'en is about being something else so it is a great time to do those kind of tributes.

L: That's why we wanted to do it and the VILETONES are badass.

I: And Rest in Peace to the drummer of the VILETONES.

L: Yeah I saw that on the blog. And also we got thongs.

B: Don't go into it Luke, please.

L: We did. We don't have to print it but it's true. They are thongs from the VILETONES.

I: Yeah, they presented it to us at the show.

They made thongs?

L: Yeah.

I: Super weird.

I don't know where to go from there. I want to ask Ivan about FARANG. Can you tell me about FARANG?

I: It is another band I do.

I think this speaks to how involved you guys are in the scene. So tell me who FARANG is?

I: It is me and three other friends. My friend Matthew Carroll who plays bass is a long time friend of mine and we have always just had this hypothetical idea.

This is with Payson, right?

I: Yeah, I didn't know Payson until we started that band.

But the two of them used to be in CAPITAL DEATH together from Nova Scotia.

I: I guess I met him around that time. **And now he is singing for PURITY CONTROL. And what does FARANG sound like?**

I: I don't know. It sounds like punk. **Luke, I want to ask you about Bridge Over Trouble Waters. Where did the idea come from?**

L: There is never going to be a good answer for that one.

I have some theories.

L: Okay there is an answer, but I don't know how pretty it is.

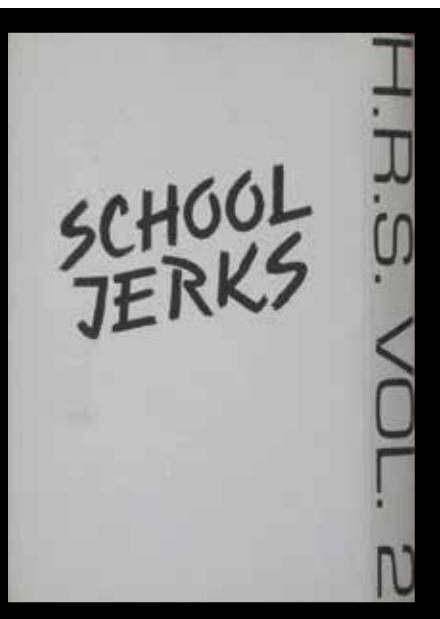
Look, I think it is a great thing. When I think about today's scene I think of this Bridge Over Trouble Waters being one of the most amazing things because I think it has taken the DIY scene to a new level and it has borrowed from other subcultures in some ways, but I don't know...

L: It is perfect that you want to say that because that will lead into a perfect

School Jerks / Negative Life-style split tape, 2010

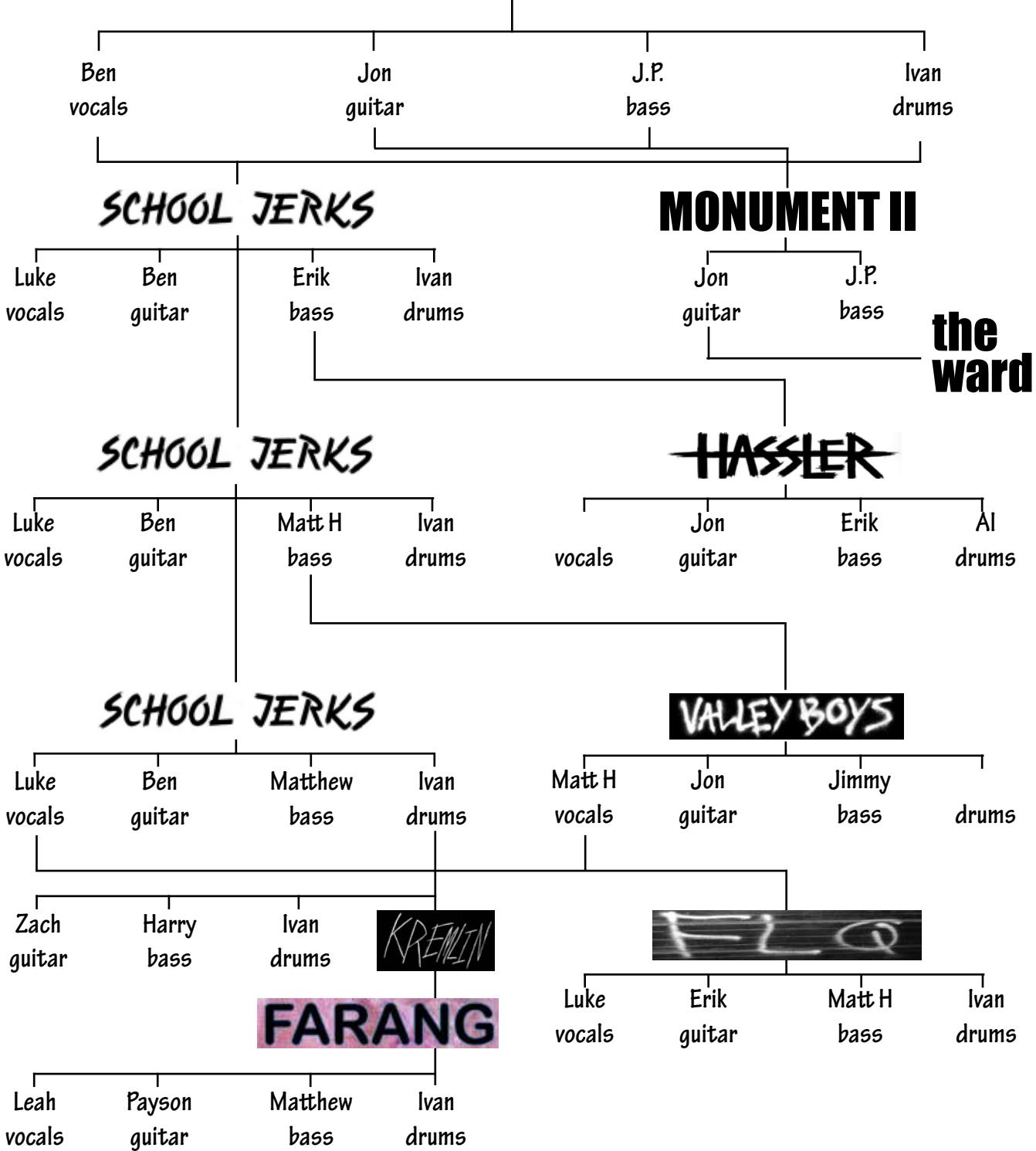
1. Control
2. N/A
3. Product

"3 songs each from 2 of the best fast, loud, and raw punk bands going today. School Jerks play snotty, punk-infused hardcore perfect for those who think Black Flag went south after Jealous Again, and Negative Lifestyle blast out 3 jams of Pick Your King-inspired nastiness. Piss raw and venomous as shit... a killer split." (H.R.S. – <http://hrsrecords.blogspot.ca>) - review from Sorry State



SCHOOL JERKS FAMILY TREE

TERMINAL STATE



explanation about why I was reticent into...

Tell me why?

L: Okay, can we talk about hipsters here? Not hipsters. People who like electronic music. They might like garage. They like things like that. They do...what was it

called...

B: Extermination Music Night?

L: Yes. They did this thing right at the Bridge. They did a show. I used to hang out there because I lived in the neighbourhood. It was kind of a place where I would drink and smoke weed,

so I like that place. Then they put on a show there and I thought that is amazing. But the problem is that these people don't care about building anything. It seems more like they want to build art installations and get the cops to come as soon as they possibly can. Like hopefully

before the show starts. It seems that is what hipsters enjoy. They just don't build anything. This is a great idea but why don't you do something like this where you can do it all the time.

B: Yeah, they would do these big shows and blow out a spot. And then do another spot.

L: It was a great idea but I wanted it to be something where we could call it a venue and this is something we could do all the time and not this big lets have a luxurious mess and then move onto the next thing.

I saw this tagline, “Where we screw in secret”.

L: I just wanted to think of a funny joke so I did that one.

I wonder if it feeds into the secret nature of the space.

L: Well it is a secret show.

I: But at first when shows started happening there, you had to give really specific directions about how to get there. But now, three years later, it is just a spot that everyone knows, which is cool, and actually something crazy happened. There was the BUKKAKE BOYS and KREMLIN show there and when we arrived to start bringing down gear there was a big sign saying “Bridge Over Trouble Waters” hanging and we have no idea who made that sign. It is cool that someone just claimed it for us all.

L: And the cops liked it too.

B: The cops are as nice as they can be



about the whole thing. I think they actually recognize that it is something positive, which is pretty wild.

It is amazing.

B: Do we need to explain what “Bridge Over Trouble Water” is?

You're right, we do need to explain it. Can we go into it? What is it? It is a good point.

L: It's a song by Simon and Garfunkle. **I know, but it is not a tribute to them.**

I: We talked about wanting to do generator shows and so what Luke was saying about these spots in Toronto where that could happen in the summer in good weather. And then one summer Luke organized this show and WHITE

LUNG and SCHOOL JERKS played and that was the first and it went amazingly well despite how it was raining. There was a million things that should have gone wrong, but it was still awesome and pretty crazy. Slowly Luke started having more shows there and some of them... they just take so much organization that some things don't always work out. There are problems with the generator. Those things are going to happen.

And lugging equipment down there, I would imagine. That is a lot of work.

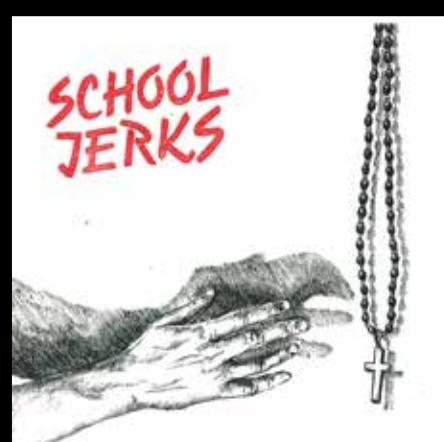
L: We have a bike car.

What is that?

B: It is like a cargo bike. Like a two person cargo bike.

School Jerks “Control” ep, 2011

The SCHOOL JERKS sound is the same. Stripped down punk that is raw and ugly and conjures up comparisons to early BLACK FLAG without the Greg Ginn experience in terms of wankage. The songs remind me of early CIRCLE JERKS so in some ways you could say that this is a lot like OFF before we heard any OFF recordings. Once again the band has self-recorded this which just adds to the raw sound and Tara's has done



another incredible piece of artwork that is part Pettibon in terms of its minimalism and stark normalcy and shittiness. More great stuff from this Toronto quartet.

SCHOOL JERKS – “Control” EP

These Canadians are snotty little shit starters. I don't know them in the biblical sense but can only imagine. I loved their last two records and they always reminded me a little of the FUCK-UPS from this here town. Well the song “Ready To Die” starts off with a little rip off of “I Think You're Shit” by the aforementioned band. Great shit. Buy this and punch someone in the face. (RO) (Cowabunga)

The songs found on here are:

1. Screamer,
2. Control,
3. Ready to Die,
4. Ugly Minds, Ugly Faces,
5. Moral Addiction,
6. 4-F

(Cowabunga Records – 311 Steam Drive / Genoa, IL / 60135 / USA / www.cowabungarecords.com)

I: But it has a huge flat bed.

L: You can carry so much stuff with it.

What a great idea.

L: My friend Matt brought it and he is a huge bike nerd. He knows how to fix it up. We use that. I figured out so many ways. My friend works for the city and we drove on a city truck down on the bike paths. We had to figure all this shit out. Actually I have keys to the parks too. We used to be able to drive down the hill through the baseball diamond because I have keys to the city.

B: You're a big man.

It is basically a ravine party.

B: Yeah, it is a ditch party.

L: It is like the suburbs brought down to downtown Toronto because nobody wants to go to the fuckin' parks anymore.

I want to boil it down because up north the hardcore scene used to do these barn parties and field parties.

L: Spider-fest?

No. But I guess that is another example of that.

L: I heard there was a guy with a chainsaw there. That's all I heard. I heard from BAD SKIN that they went and there was this guy running around with a chainsaw on acid and they were like "We gotta go."

Weren't you guys supposed to play Spider-fest?

L: Yeah we were. We didn't get to play because of Ben's mom's birthday.

B: We could have brought her. True punks.

I love this idea. It is a generator party. You play down in this ravine.

I: It is super punk.



It is very DIY.

B: There is a weird cross section of people that come that would never be in a venue together because it is open to anyone.

I: We try and mix the bands on purpose and Luke has done an amazing job of having two bands that maybe wouldn't play together.

I have seen some pictures of the shows. They look amazing. There is so much I love about this. I am not going to go into it right now.

I: And also it is cool that it is the Don Valley because we all grew up in the east end of Toronto. The Don Valley has this history of being a weird places with vagabonds and scumminess.

B: It forces people to come to the east end.

It is a dead river.

L: It is so gross. You can see the runoff. The pollution. It is copper stained in this little puddle in the corner. It was funny because somebody's dog jumped in and they were like "No!". It is disgusting.

Ben, do you continue to record everything?

B: Yeah, part of the idea of the band, for better or for worse, was the recording was the same as playing. You wouldn't get someone to play guitar for you so why would you get someone else to record you? The equipment and information is so available now.

So many people in this city rely on a few sound engineers, for better or for worse, and I think because you do it yourself your sound stands out.

B: Yeah. For me the recording is as much

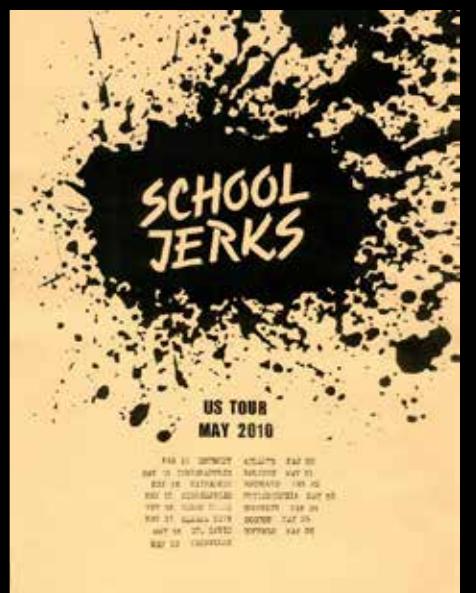
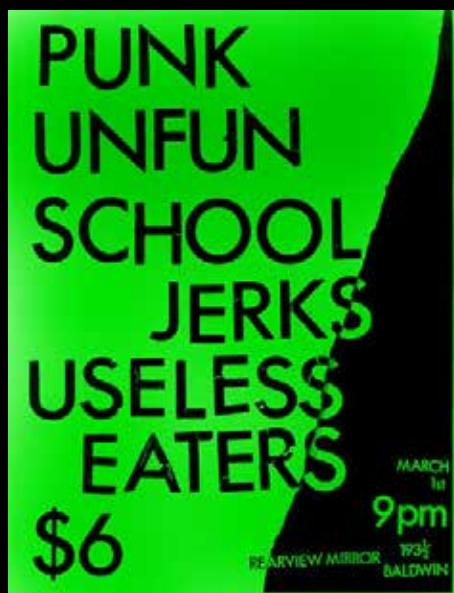




Photo by Sergio Amalfitano

of the identity of the band as the way the instruments sound, or the song writing or the lyrics or the artwork so it is just another element.

What are you trying to capture sound wise with the recording? I was listening to the LP for hours last night and I was struck with how well everything comes out. Somehow you have made everything sound great. Everyone gets equal time. Somehow you have been able to get everyone to shine.

B: If you are recording it yourself or someone else is recording you it is really hard if you are recording with someone who doesn't understand punk music because they are going to approach it like it is rock music or pop music.

They are going to muffle something.

B: Try to make it controlled or try to make it clear when really you are trying to capture the intensity of the sound. It is a different thing recording punk music. There is a way to record it and mix it so that everything is heard and yet they are

fighting each other a little bit. Like if the vocals aren't too loud it is going to make them sound more intense if the guitars and drums and vocals have to fight each other for space.

That is kind of like a practice really. From what I remember about practise I was always trying to scream over top of guitars and drums. That's how it is played. That's how you hear it. That's how you rehearse it. It's always like that. You have done a great job.

B: Right on thanks.

L: It has gotten better. It needed some improvement.

B: The early releases were weird in some ways and also the other really big thing is making the most out of what we have. It has mainly been done with a four track cassette.

I think there is consistency in the recording sound too. Some bands you can tell periods of their work. With the SCHOOL JERKS each release has a similar sound.

B: It is really weird if you recorded with

different people or at different studios your recordings would be so...

schizophrenic.

B: Yeah. That is actually pretty standard. A lot of bands do that. It is odd to me. A lot of people find a place they like and go back there. I think it makes sense to have a

sound.

B: Yeah. It changed over time, but it is just like a progression on the original idea, the same way the song writing would be a progression on the original idea.

L: And it is the same way with our band too with our instruments.

I: Yeah we have gotten better at playing our instruments.

L: I mean the equipment we use and the way we tape drums and the way you set up your guitar and the amps that we use. There is the sound of that too.

B: We wouldn't change our instruments.

L: We had this bad ass SG amp, rest in peace, because of CAREER SUICIDE at the Bridge. The way we set up our equipment is different from everybody.

Oh what do you mean?

L: Our drums sound we intentionally sound different than other bands when we are playing live.

B: It is a weird thing to get into.

L: I just think we sound different even if you want to see us at a show.

B: People said stuff to us when we first started out that people are used to a lot of loud music and we are not the loudest punk band out there.

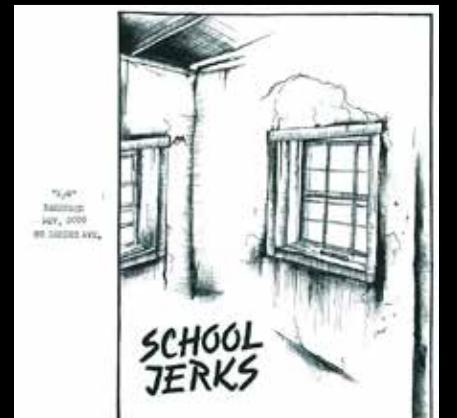
I: Maybe we are now, but we weren't when we first started.

L: We don't like metal that much.

I: And that was the thing. We would always have broken gear or just weird gear and that really shows on the early recordings. We used stuff that was just

VA "City Limits" LP, 2011

A dual city comp between Montreal and Toronto in an MCR like sound clash. Chris Colohon's label High Anxiety did the deed using "N/A" from the second tape and a "Screamer" from the first ep. (High Anxiety – highanxiety416.blogspot.ca/)



strange like I built this snare drum that wasn't really...it was just this weird thing. Ben built it more, but we put it together.

B: Yeah, we had done some weird stuff because of not having the money or interest in being cheesy dudes who go out and buy expensive gear. We have done a lot of weird things involving duct tape and...

...and it works. Let me go through the songs on the record. Let's start off with the first one "Why Ask Why?". What is that song about and why don't you like to ask the question why?

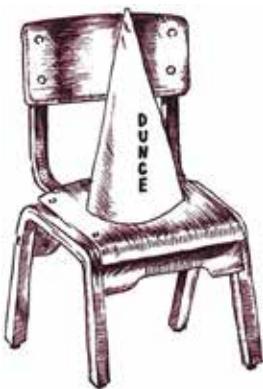
L: The whole point of it is when you are trying to figure out why you are doing something you eventually say why am I even thinking about thinking about something to the point of where you don't get it.

It is the philosopher's dilemma really.

L: ...until you forget that you even asked the question so you obey.

So it is like circular arguments until you convince yourself to give up.

L: Yeah. That is the whole thing. It's about giving up. I am constantly trying to figure out why people are the way they are so much to the point where I think people give up and aren't just mindlessly doing the things that they do, but I think I am giving people too much credit to think that. It seems a lot of times that there must be something behind that guy.



He must have moments at night where he is thinking of the job or the system, but he probably doesn't even think that. I try so hard to figure that out.

It makes sense. I think I do that all the time to people. So I wanted to ask you about musical influences on this. This is where I hear a lot of FLAG references. So the opening guitar ringing part made me think about "I've Heard it Before" and then there is a drumming transition in the middle which sounds like "Gimme Gimme Gimme".

L: I don't think it sounds like that at all. **I could be wrong, but that's what it sounds like to me, like every other**

reviewer.

B: Yeah sure the intro is totally influenced by them. It is a discordant kind of chord.

It is not chord for chord but there is something that reminds me of that part in "I've Heard it Before".

B: The intro is a discordant part and that is something that is pretty specific to Greg Ginn. He was willing to do some freaky shit that other people weren't in punk

L: It was jazz man.

B: Something like that I will say it is totally that.

It is there inspiration. Okay let me go on about "Ugly Minds, Ugly Faces".

What is that song about?

L: That is the second time we put that song out. The lyrics are on the third one.

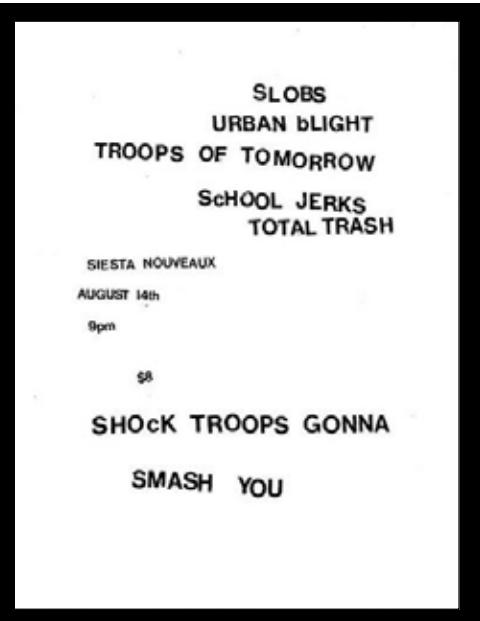
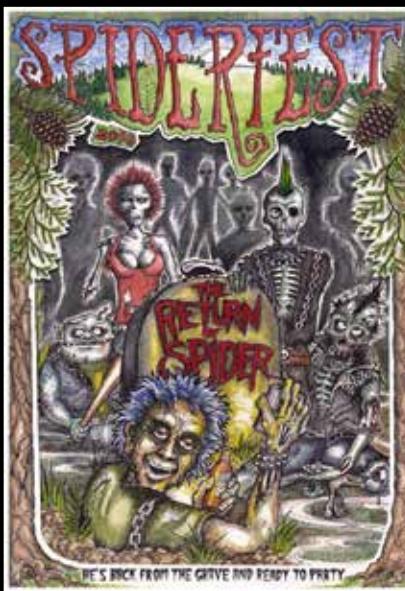
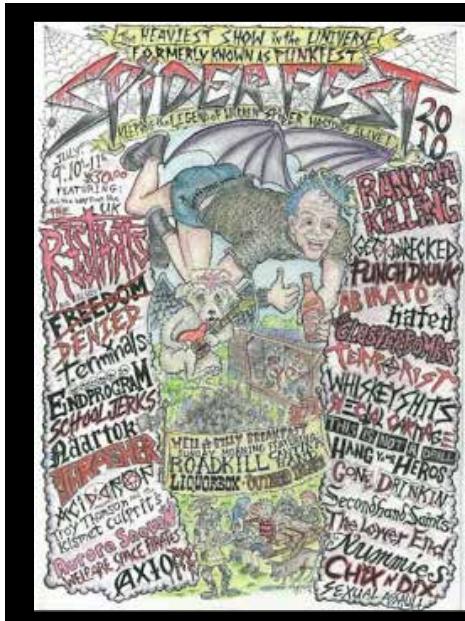


Photo by Sergio Amalfitano

Generally I like to have it messy and I like the way lines sound cool. And then just go and another one and another one so everything sounds awesome but I tried more to have more to say that is lewd and obnoxious.

I'm not looking for a line by line breakdown, but I am trying to get the general gist of the song.

L: It is mainly just inspired by this ranting about things and understanding what is going on and being paranoid and scared by living in the city with everything that is going on around you. It is all about paranoia and losing your mind, but about rage. It is more about paranoia and fear. Constantly saying line after line of that kind of thing. I am trying not to have much to say other than

making it just sound good. Do you know what I am saying?

Ugly thought wise. That fits the theme.

L: Yeah. That is what I am trying to do more is I am trying to have something a little more to say. When I don't have much I say things that sound cool instead of having something that is one statement.

B: So each line says something. The whole song doesn't necessarily say one thing that you could wrap up.

L: Yeah, well that is basically what the band is like now. If you want to talk about living in society the way it is now I am not going to talk about one subject. It is all a big mish mash of how my life is. I am constantly just pissed about so many things. Living in North America I am

sure you can probably understand that it is so shitty for so many reasons it is just constantly going this and that.

B: The lyrics are like your own thoughts and feelings. It is a little bit mashed up and confused.

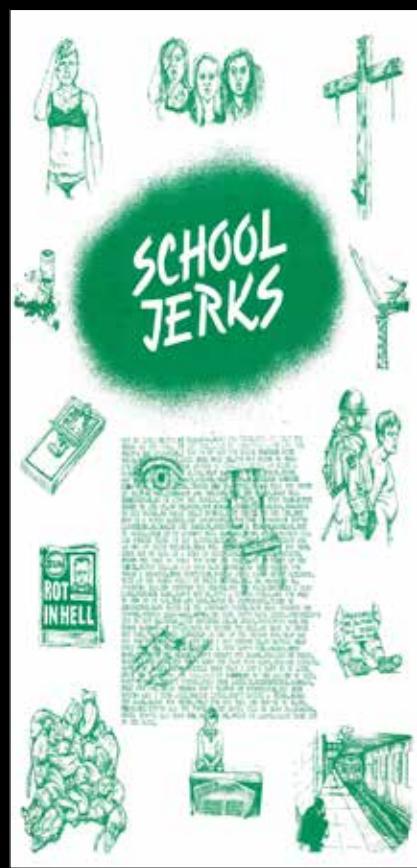
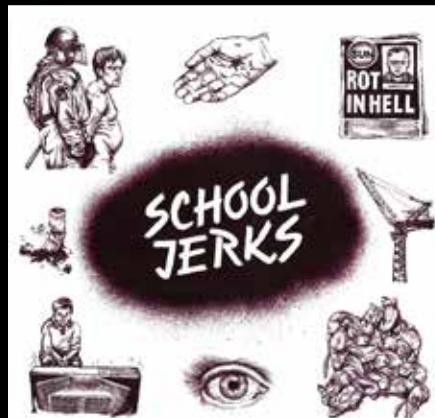
L: It is not like CRASS or something. We are not talking about leather or...

B: We are not making any specific statement about the world, you are just putting out how you really feel. It is a weird spattering of shit. And the reason for being in a band is cool and being creative is so I can do it in a way that has some panache to it. That is mainly what I am trying to do. I am not saying that every single song is like that, but so much of it really is on this LP.

What is the song "Crux" about?

School Jerks LP, 2012

1. Why Ask Why?, 2. Ugly Minds, Ugly Faces, 3. Crux, 4. No Parole, 5. Outcast, 6. Secrets, 7. Wicked World, 8. Arrogant Order, 9. Endless Mirrors, 10. On Every Corner, 11. Problems, 12. Slums of the Future
(Grave Mistake Records – gravemistakerecords.com / Bad Vibrations - badvibrationsrecords.blogspot.ca/)



School Jerks Lp
Holy shit, the new School Jerks Lp just killed it. once again Tara Bursey handled all the illustration work for this release as she did on their earlier EP, and once again i am blown away. instead of focusing in on a single image as subject matter, we have been presented with a series of smaller images arranged around the parameter of the cover which creates somewhat of a tattoo flash / sketchbook feel. these smaller images were all given excellent attention to detail, and each one would make for a strong piece on its own....

These covers were professionally offset printed black ink on white coated cover stock, cut and glued. the back cover has another 7 small illustrations floating around the typewriter-set song titles in the center of the panel. i'm not usually a big

fan of cross hatch shading in illustration work, but she controls her pen lines very well and brings in the right level of depth to her drawings...

There is a folded newsprint insert included with this release that has been one color spot printed with a bright green ink. the artwork is basically a mash up of all the illustrated elements from the front and back cover art overlayed with the typewritten lyrics in a small box near the center. i would have loved to have seen more of her illustration work here (maybe just a single drawing large with the lyrics below?), but what this insert lacks in originality it makes up for in execution. green ink on newsprint!?!? love it....

Review at <http://art4punks.blogspot.ca/2012/11/school-jerks-lp.html>

Photo by Sergio Amalfitano



L: It is just like the other one. I would say that it is vaguely inspired by the band VILE because it is trying to define things. Like "I am going to tell you about god and sum it up in a sentence" or something. It's like "this is what racism is. This is what that is."

B: Fitting it in a thirty second pop song. "Life. Love. Death". Kind of like Springsteen.

L: A lot like Springsteen. Actually somebody said we were a lot like Springsteen in a review recently.

B: I read that review. That was awkward and weird.

L: Anyway, the chorus ties together all

the definitions in the lyrics as I express my dissatisfaction with everything. It seems that I am talking about other people instead of myself. It is just trying to do definitions about religion and other things. I just wanted to say that I have the arrogance to have the definitive answer on all things.

On all isms.

L: Anything. Anything you needed to know I am going to tell you about it. God. Figured that out a long time ago. I don't know where you have been.

Fiction.

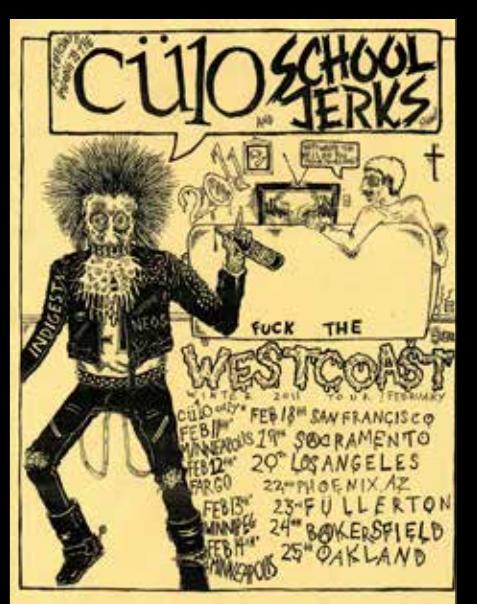
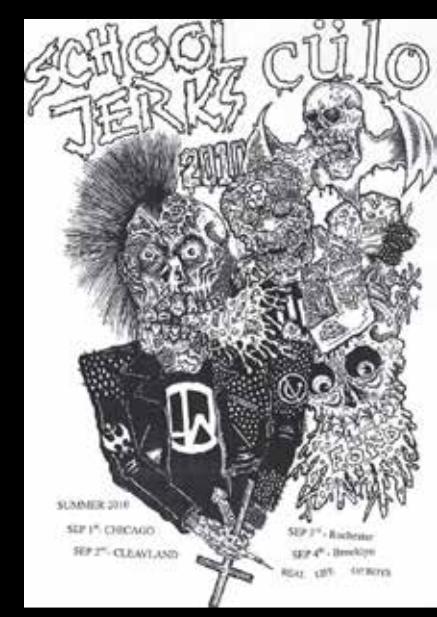
L: Yeah.

The song "No Parole".

L: That is the one about the Colonel. I wanted to write about that guy because I just thought it was really insane when that story came out especially because he flew the Queen around. Being as close as he was to big power and being in the military and of that stature doing something like that is insane to me. You think so much about abuse of power although he didn't really do that but I guess he did because he used his training.

Also the trust. He has the uniform. People trust the uniform.

L: For all the things that he did I don't think it was a matter of that. He was just doing surveillance and going to people's houses without them knowing until it was too late. I am not the best because I didn't read tons about it but I did want to talk about it. It was a really messed up story. When we were doing the LP I was thinking about having more songs about where we are from. It is cheesy to say but I wanted to make it more Canadian. Before I felt like I was trying to be an American. Like when we were talking about that 60's song I was talking so much about American culture. In some ways I wanted to make it more about where we are from and talk about things that are happening right now.



B: ...and that runs through the whole record.

L: It is all me trying to make it more about our time and about things going on about us right now and things going on in Toronto and things going on like that. I just wanted it to be more generalized.

We have our own fucked up stories to tell.

L: That was one motivation to do that song. All that song is about is talking about his charges and his trials. He is not going to have any parole apparently. Now we know that.

B: It is not really true though.

L: He is going to get parole?

B: There is no such thing as no parole in Canada. So that is actually an American concept.

L: I read it somewhere. It wasn't like I came with that idea.

B: You should look into it.

You could add a question mark at the end of the title. What is the song “Outcast” about?

L: It is all explanations of how to live with other people. It is like helpful tips on how to interact with human beings. It has something to do with Asberger's. Have trouble with the basics of looking people in the eye when talking to them.

B: And social cues.

L: Even if you didn't do something on the weekend you say you did do



Photo by Sergio Amalfitano

something on the weekend.

To fit in?

L: Yeah. I was on this website for things to do to assimilate and work well with other people. It mainly had to do with mental illness, which is interesting because it feels like my life or maybe I am just more mentally ill than I thought.



It is funny when you see social norms as prescribed.

B: Yeah and like you could map it out and choose to not live your life in a way you want to do and just follow the code.

J : Like make friends and influence

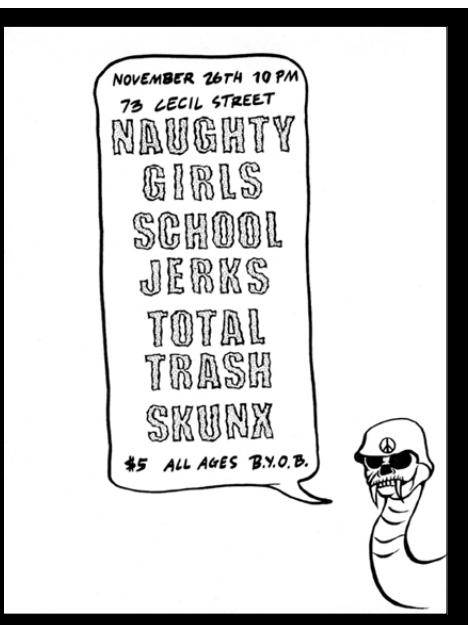
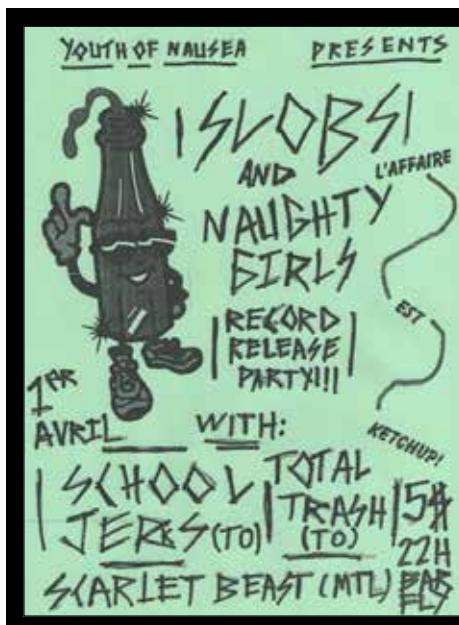




Photo by Andrew Carver

L: Yeah. Sure. I don't know. It's the reactive process man. There are a lot of strands in the dudes head. That's definitely in there.

"Wicked World".

L: That's the one where I was influenced by SCREWDRIVER.

How so?

L: The lyrics were. I wanted to do one of their songs, but make fun of them at the same time. The lyrics are about working class people meeting up at bars and they have the whole world figured out. They are like "Let me tell you something son. I'm on welfare and I do this and that but I have it all figured out." It's about people who think they are geniuses and they think they know about history, but then they make up history. They have been taught things that they know

about Canadian history. It is just something that is second hand gossip. But they think they are really well educated.

They heard something at a bar about Trudeau. The people who think they have it all figured out are ignorant. I just wanted to have somebody ranting talking about how they have the whole world figured out. You know how SCREWDRIVER were stupid with that in "All Screwed Up"? I just wanted to be influenced by that.

Sure. They were masters of revisionist history.

L: It was all about shouting about kids in Blackpool. I just wanted to make fun of them in my own mind but I guess everybody else knows that now.

That's okay, if that's the idea. Thanks for demystifying this for us. "Arrogant Order".

B: That's a pretty similar theme.

L: I was watching something on TVO. It was about Barrack Obama was talking about his first election campaign. It was one of those things that gets into the major press. He kind of thought he was talking to the people in the room meanwhile everyone in America is hearing what he is saying. He was saying when economics goes down people cling to guns and religion.

Desperate times kind of thing?

L: Yeah. Desperate times calls for desperate measures or guns and religion.

This guy was talking about people are so much more scared of democracy which is why Republicans have such a strong hold on desperate people. Even now

conservatives are fucking us over again and again that the only answer we have is from the same people that fucked us over. It's to the point now where the people who would have a legitimate answer to our problems or would bail us out a little bit we don't trust anymore. We are like government is wrong. You are crazy. We are so scared and follow the people who got us into the problems and don't give us any fresh answers. So it is all about being scared of truth to the answers of our problems and just going "No you are wrong" and have faith in



this arrogant order, which I thought was a fancy way of saying it. That's what the whole song is about. This is the right way, I swear it is even though it is going to dig us deeper and deeper into a hole.

So arrogance representing the elite class and they are the ones trying to bully us with this ideology of conservatism. They creating the problems and now they are pushing an even worse solution.

L: Yeah. It is an interesting time for sure because right now with their new answers being the same answers as before.

B: They are just trying to turn back the clock.

L: It is an interesting time in politics for that.

Although in Canada it doesn't even seem like we pay attention to it.

I feel like we are at the edge of a cliff.

L: It's a hell of a toboggan ride.

What is "Endless Mirrors" about?

L: In succeeding in life even your best friends won't tell you about a job opportunity because they want it.



It sounds like dog eat dog.

L: No matter what we are wrapped up in that. We are forced to compete. It is just so crazy that we are wrapped up in some society where this is a good idea. Even if you think it is a bad idea you still have to play ball. We are all in this together fucking each other over any way we possibly can. Even when you think you have a value you can't value it anymore because you have to think about survival. You are living in somebody else's ... what somebody thinks is paradise but fuck if it is not for me or anybody else to think in these terms about fucking people over. I wish I could be charitable but I am not in the place to

be charitable. It's a weird mindfuck and so I wanted to talk about it.

It reminds me of F.U.'s "Daisy Chain".

L: I don't know that song.

You know what the idea of a daisy chain is? The sexual idea where everyone fucks each other in a circle.

L: Ohhh. I did not know that. But I have seen a t-shirt like that.

The opening lyrics are "Welcome to Boston, it's a company town, you either play by the rules or you get stomped to the ground. It's a lovely arrangement that we've got going here where you fuck everybody year after year." I have always wanted to do that as a cover.

B: It is cool that they wrote that song that is very specific to their town. That is the same way we are trying experience Toronto. Boston is a notoriously corrupt city so that is specific to their city.

But I think it is the same idea here. This is a company town in a lot of ways. We have the stock exchange and everything filters out of that.

L: Aren't we lucky. Do you want to live in Windsor my friend? They got nothing. This is mecca. We are already dirty we





Photo by Andrew Carver

might as well be the dirtiest place.

Are you trying to do your best Republican impersonation?

L: No. I honestly think that metropolitan cities are where it's at.

B: I disagree. Let's not go there.

L: In some ways I have a sick fascination with cities. Even though it is terrible I would like to be closer to the evil than the woods.

I agree. I grew up in redneck territory.
L: Well I didn't. I grew up at Church and Wellesley my friend. I'm as downtown as you can get. It's not like you assholes that pretend you are from Toronto. All you fuckin' fakes.

B: I wish I wasn't from Toronto.

L: You wish you were from Waterloo, but you are from Toronto.

Let me ask about "On Every Corner".

L: I was trying to talk abut how things

are gong to get volatile. I think the possibilities of people making bombs is going to get easier. I think when anyone can make a nuclear bomb. I just think that terrorism is going to get worse and I don't think it is going to be a foreign issue anymore. I think that anybody who is crazy could do that.

That has been the CIA's plans since the 60's. That is why COINTELPRO started up. The whole justification for the Counter Intelligence Program was to destabilize any kind of activist group in the 60's with AIM and all of them groups. The whole idea that urban guerrilla warfare was inside. This was the enemy within.

L: That is what I was trying to get at. I don't even think you have to have a political issue.

It was a justification to spy on their

own people.

L: Sure if you want to get into all of that. The way I was trying to approach it more was that when these things happen the people who have faith in our society would be "why is this happening? We are just. Why would anything go against us?" The approach I took to tackle this was "these things don't happen. Why would they happen because we are doing everything right? Why would anyone have anything against us?

But the shortcomings of an unsustainable society lead people to....

L: Yeah but it is not supposed to be. It is supposed to be great. And everybody is supposed to love it. So why are bad things happening to...

You are calling society out on its promise.

L: Yeah. Why do bad things happen to good people?

"Slums of the Future". Is that a song about the future?

L: Yeah that is all about condos.

I was recently in St. Petersburg last year and I looked at the skyline which was being built with these glass towers and recently we have had a whole bunch of these glass plates that have been falling from these new condos that have been built within five years.





Photo by Sergio Amalfitano

The owners are going that wasn't supposed to happen. This town that we have built that is now fragile, made out of one of the most fragile substances, you know obviously it is going to fall apart.

B: Physically but what sustains the city is fragile too. That will go away as well. I think that is what the song is about.

L: I was mainly talking about where I grew up. St. Jamestown used to be luxury housing and now....

That is an excellent example.

L: Immigrants are now living in these luxury apartments, but they are trying to raise a whole family in them, which before would have

been a Norman Rockwell painting. The elevators aren't equipped to carry the number of people in the building.

They were built for yuppies.

L: I thought that was interesting. Then in Ben's neighbourhood, Ossington is being

developed so much. Toronto has said we can't do this that much. People just want to make something hip. Like Yorkville. It used to be a place for artists and now it is like "Holy fuck". How could you even say that was the same neighbourhood?

B: It is hard to believe that Neil Young was there.

L: Because right now I am sure Neil Young wouldn't hang out there.

B: Neil Young is there getting a mani-pedi. It feels like we are using areas that become hip and then devour them and move onto the next. That will be the slum of the future. It will be full circle. I am hoping all these bad things will happen.

I want to ask you

about touring and the experience that this has had on the band because you have done quite a few tours. Ivan and I were talking and I think you have toured five times now. Let's talk about the interesting experiences. I have seen

that you have played quite a bit with CULO. It seems like there is a mutual relationship with this band. Can you tell me about it?

B: A lot of bands do the two bands on one tour thing. We never did that in our old band and I never understood why bands did that, but then we realized that it is hard to be a band on the road by yourself. You don't have enough people to look after your stuff. People in punk can be really shitty sometimes. You show up to a show and there is a bunch of animalistic crusties and the promoter doesn't give a shit. Sometimes you just need a support group. We found that it was a lot more practical to have a lot more people around. We also always have an awesome band to open for or play after and watch their set. So every show even if the show is totally bizarre we will have a great time because we have these two great bands.

L: CULO is pretty great. I never thought I would be interested in seeing a band every day but seeing them was so good. **And did it motivate you guys to do different things too?**

L: It motivated me to want to be better. B: There is a healthy competition for sure.





Photo by Daniel Vella

L: Now they are eclipsing us.

B: It is hard to keep up.

L: They got the bro-core a little more which is why I think they are more popular.

Can you tell me about the show you guys played in Pheonix?

L: That was a good show. That had an awesome P.A. That was the coolest P.A. we have ever played on.

There was a star story though. You got to meet some guy from JFA.

B: I thought the star would be NO BUNNY. We got to meet the guy from JFA, we didn't get to meet NO BUNNY.

L: I was talking to him and I said you are Nobody and he is like "No I'm not" and I said "Yeah you fuckin' are" and he went behind a dumpster and got into his outfit. I was thinking you are such a knob. Why not have some turkey talk.

B: What did you want to talk to him about?

L: No he wanted to talk to me. He wanted to talk about the WHITE WIRES and Ottawa and I'm like "I know her." The guy from JFA was funny though.

He goes into Best Buy and pretends he is a Greek guy asking for SEX PISTOLS albums. "I want the Pistols of Sex. I want the Conformity of Corrosion". He would say everything backwards. He constantly calls Best Buy and it bothers them. That was really funny.

I also understand you played in a storage unit there.

B: In Pheonix and assume L.A. too they have turned old storage units into

practice spaces. I guess heating isn't a big issue. So it is like a big practice space that they have shows in.

You think there is a possibility for that here? Maybe not because of the weather.

L: Wait. My house, we are turning into a venue and we are having a show for KREMLIN in a few weeks. We will be turning it into a practice space and we are going to try and have something more like not having a bar hopefully. That is the storage space.

B: One time we played a show in Chicago and they had a house that no one lived in. They just rented it out for band practices and shows so we were sort of thinking about doing that with Luke's house.

L: My house is fuckin' freezing. It is such an old piece of shit. I thought it was such a good deal but now it is winter and it is like being outside when the heat is not on so I am trying to turn this disaster into an opportunity.

That is very new Right of you.

B: We can make some money.

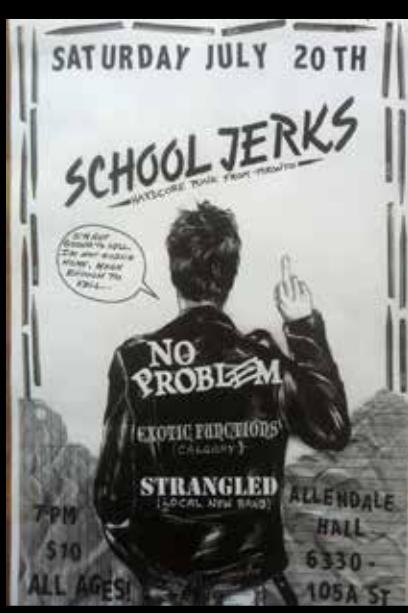
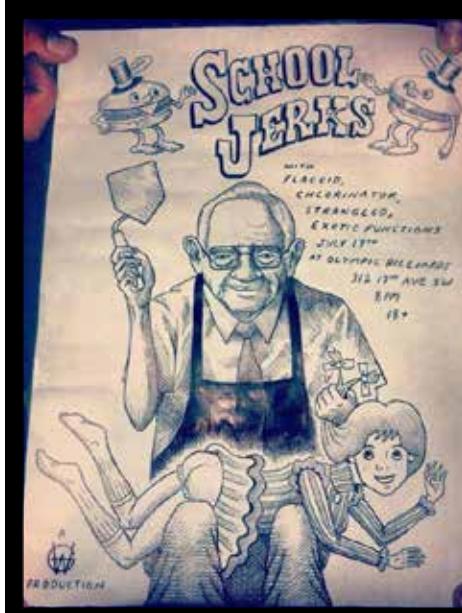
L: We can make so much fuckin' money.

Won't ya? Tell me about the L.A. show that you played with SILENZIO STATICO.

B: Oh yeah. That was cool.

L: There was people making Mexican food out front that was bad ass.

B: They have a pretty cool scene



happening there. Pretty small group of people. There is not a lot going on in L.A. other than them and they sort of just created their own little scene out of nothing. I don't know what was going on for them before ...

I think L.A. is a tough scene because it is such a sprawl.

B: Yeah and the kids in Fullerton didn't even know about SILENZIO STATICO. I was thinking people all around the world know about them, but people in the next town over don't know about them. So I guess they just had to make their own fun. If they wanted bands, if they wanted shows, they had to make them all. They made like this music scene.

L: They have the craziest house too. Living in Compton is cheap. It looked like the place they made porn in the 70's. B: They had a strip mall. It was a whole little strip mall that was all theirs and you go in and close the gate to the street. And they do all their own recording and screen printing. Like a lot of the stuff that we do. They do their own in-house production. The show wasn't actually there. The show was at a community centre. So they do get outside of their own little group, but not just with punk also with people in their neighbourhood. There was a lot of random people at the show that were making food and eating food that didn't really care about punk. L: The thing was that they had this plot of land that wasn't being used and they were doing farming there, but then the guy who owned the property said "No I don't like it. I am not going to use it. I am just going to put a fence around it." I don't want you guys to farm there.

B: That was for the community centre.

L: The community centre was the last little piece they have left of the farming area.

B: I wondered why they called it a Farmer's Market.

L: That asshole put a fence around it and said "I am not going to do anything with it, but I just don't want you guys farming it."

B: Right. So it was just an abandoned lot. But they managed to legally get the one little bit of it.

L: No that is just the remnants of what they were doing before.

B: Wow.

L: It is pretty depressing. Thanks for bringing that up.

Photo by Al Quint



I am just trying to figure out how other people do stuff in other places because you guys have had the opportunity to go to some of these places and experience it.

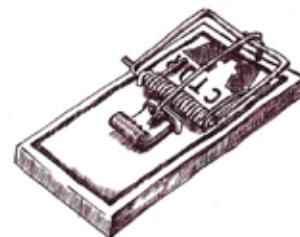
B: Right so the original question was about the influence of touring so that is the perfect example of that.

So I have a few more. What do you think of the scene in Brooklyn?

L: There was a lot of people there.

B: We were talking about this the other day. It's good and bad. Mainly there is a lot of people.

L: You just can't believe that there is that many people at a show. It is nuts because



we live in Toronto and we are one of the biggest populated cities but there is just not that many punks. It is just overwhelming. I can't say anything good or bad about it.

B: A weird thing is that there is this scene in Brooklyn now and in 2005 bands would tour and not go to New York because there was not really a scene there. You could do ABC-No-Rio or something. But bands would play in New Jersey and stuff. It is weird because now there is the rise of a punk scene in the New York area is related to the hipster thing and the fact that in 2000 there was a whole city of youth culture in Brooklyn that didn't exist ten



Photo by Daniel Vella

or fifteen years ago. Somehow there is probably some terrible things about it, but somehow it has allowed punk to have a place in that area.

My wife used to talk about Long island. She used to know lots of punks in Long Island. She stayed there for a week and one night they went out to a movie and everybody in the movie theatre had some kind of punk shirt on. This was about 15 years ago. Scenes evolve in certain places. It is interesting to try and figure out why they develop where they do. I am looking to you guys to see if there is pieces that you can glean from being there.

L: Well the last show we played there was pretty nuts because hardly any bands were from New York. There was the ANNIHILATION TIME new band and the band from Mexico and us and CULO.

Maybe it was just a coincidental convergence of a bunch of bands that came through at the same time.

L: Well everyone must be going there on tour saying lets go there.

B: Also the same night or weekend there was a NEGATIVE APPROACH reunion show and this thing was being billed as the alternative to that and the flyer had a picture of John Brannon from the Touch 'n Go book ripped in half and it said "That was then, this is now". They made a point to get some of the best bands currently doing something cool so it was us and CULO and PERDITION and a few other bands.

Cleveland.

B: People are crazy there.

L: We talked to other people about how people mosh to the point of breaking stuff and other people say they try and do that. They have to keep up this thing.

B: They do. It is a Cleveland tradition from an older scene.

L: But I also think that you have to go that insane if you are from Cleveland. If you have to go insane you have to be that insane to do it.

Cleveland is a tough town.

I: There is something more to it.

B: I wouldn't put a garbage can on my head and mosh because I am a pussy.

L: I put a garbage can over my head because they were throwing bottles at us.

It was good of you to offer yourself up as the target. I'm sure once you put the garbage can on your head you became the target. Sacrificial lamb.

Well done.

B: Cleveland, even though it seems totally crazy and nihilistic it is like they are trying to have a good time. It is their own version of making their own fun because they have to. It makes me think of somewhere we should really talk about if we are talking about influences which is Rochester. That has been a huge

influence on us. Cleveland reminds me a lot of Rochester. A smaller city with people making their own fun and getting pretty wild in the process.

I: And always pretty good bands too.

Bands that are really different. When you go on tour so many bands sound pretty similar those two places have bands that you have never heard of and that are really good.

B: It is sort of the complete opposite of New York. There is not this high level of awareness. We're in this band that is a mixture of this and this and this and we're all over the internet.

I: And they have a record out before they have even played a show.

It is more earned. They might not be well known but they deserved to be well known.

B: Yeah. And they are well known there. There are bands that are unknown everywhere else but they are huge in Rochester. There is a huge insular local scene.

So they support their own.

B: Yeah. And we have done some shows there and nobody has heard of these bands in the line up but there were a few hundred kids there because everyone in town had heard of these bands.

L: It has a lot to do with Matt I think. Talking to him it seems like he has tried really hard to include everybody into punk into his shows.

He has built up a community there.

L: There is bands that he doesn't even like that he puts on. He is like "How could I expect kids to like my band if I don't even give them the chance." He





Photo by Sergio Amalfitano

is like "I have to give them a chance or they will never give me a chance." I guess that is the cool thing about ...
I: He plays in that band the NARCS.
So it is to create a mutual relationship between bands.

L: Yeah. He has his own place where he puts on shows. The subway doesn't exist anymore so we had a show in the abandoned subway.

No way?

L: Yeah. It was cool. It is really bad. There is mercury all over the place. We had masks and stuff.

Well it could add to the theatrics. Hey they are building lots of subway tunnels here. You should go play those. You have been to both coasts. You did a tour of California a couple of years back. Are there differences in the scene between the east coast and the west coast? Ivan we were talking about the influences of gentrification on the east coast as

being a factor. Do you remember what we were talking about last night?

I: It seemed a bit more similar playing in San Francisco than a bigger city and the gentrification processes seemed more similar. We played at a bar right downtown.



B: I think bigger than the punk scene there is just a bigger difference in the culture between the mid-west and the east coast and then California. And San Francisco is an older city. It felt like being at home and people were sort of

part of the same culture as us.

Well it is a port city and we are a port city. There is some similarities in that.

B: But when we were outside of San Francisco, the rest of California felt like we were travelers on a different planet. Everyone was just so weird punk or not.

Maybe too much sun. I don't know.

L: Fullerton, man. The

ADOLESCENTS was a long time ago.

B: We were talking about **SILENZIO STATICO** earlier. Obviously I don't want to write off the state of California, I don't want to be shitty, it is just very different to us and we felt like we didn't get something when we were out there.

I: We only went there once but yeah.

L: Oakland was the best because they let us stay even when we were at other cities.

B: We played a show in Bakersfield and it was terrible. Nobody at the entire show would give us a place to stay and we felt so out of place. We are at a punk show and we were so unwelcome. The people



Photo by Daniel Vella

in Oakland were really hospitable and we drove back from Bakersfield. We called them in the middle of the night.

L: We stayed there when we were in San Francisco too. We stayed there for four nights.

That is pretty amazing. That is nice to have. What is the band working on in the near future? What do you have planned?

I: The future is unwritten.

Thanks Joe Strummer.

L: We just put out a fuckin' LP.

B: What more do you want from us?

We want more.

L: How many bands put out an LP?

I: And not to pat our own backs but how many bands put out an LP and it either changes the band or changes the way people see the band or it doesn't.

B: The LP is a pretty good. It is the same as the 7's just a full length. It is like SCHOOL JERKS, the movie, whereas a lot of time the 12" is like the earlier stuff and then they had that freaky 12" with all the weird leads on it. Or it had really odd production.

Have you heard much about this LP

yet?

L: I google things occasionally. Now that we have the label, hopefully people are going to sell this for us.

B: In the near future, that is what we are trying to do is to just get people to hear the record and for the sake of the label get copies sold.

On the way here I read a review of you.

L: Like in a newspaper?

No MRR. Of the LP. Do you want to hear it?

B: I really don't. If you guys can accommodate my bizarre. I know this sounds so weird but ... I take what we do seriously and I just can't think about certain things or I will drive myself insane.

L: He is already obsessive as is.

B: Yeah, like I have some issues and I probably think about the band in ways that are unhealthy and reviews really fuel that.

How can people get in touch with the band?

L: By e-mail. schooljerks@gmail.com.
You have a blog right.

B: schooljerksadventurepunks.blogspot.ca/.

L: If you google SCHOOL JERKS we are bigger than the VAINS so it is no big deal.

B: You should contact us by googling us. If anyone wanted to contact us about the label ...

There is a link on the blog.

B: Because the label is basically the band they could go to the band or there is links.

